Meeting Overview

- February 23, 2021
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- All Planning Commissioners were in attendance
- Consultant Team Members in attendance included: Deana Rhodeside, Ron Sessoms, Jenny Koch, Max Pastore, LaToya Thomas, Lee Einsweiler
- Meeting materials are available here.

Meeting Notes

These are unofficial notes from the meeting. Full minutes will be published here.

1) Charlottesville Today / Existing Conditions

a) Any additional key data points that you think should be considered?

- **Bill Palmer**: Show areas of high density UVA housing that's actually in the city – e.g., Brandon Avenue.
- **Hosea Mitchell**: Consider that lots of the vacant sites are very difficult to build on because of slopes. Planning Commission might not approve those sites being developed for residential use – they are often on critical slopes to critical waterways.
- **Liz Russell**: Show City-owned and CRHA-owned properties.
- **Taneia Dowell**: Regarding Slide 21, can we get some type of analysis/breakdown for price-points of units?
  - **Missy Creasy** noted that the consultant team used a development review sheet, which gives a basic description of what's proposed for each site but which wouldn't get into details of price point of units.
  - **Taneia** asked Missy to send this information, if possible.

2) Previous & Current Planning Efforts

a) Any other relevant plans that you think should be considered?

- **Lyle Solla-Yates:**
  - Regional Transit Plan – crucial to move people from parking to buses
  - (Via chat) Bike/ped. plan
- **Rory Stolzenberg:**
  - Current County Broadway Blueprint study – near Woolen Mills
  - UVA Brandon Avenue Master Plan – right off JPA
- **Hosea**:

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  - Regarding slide 24, and mention of "entrenched patterns of racial segregation" from the Affordable Housing Plan page. Some have raised concerns about intentionally trying to create diverse communities – for example, Vinegar Hill tried to make a "mixed use /diverse community" but instead in many ways a hurt a community.
    (a) **Lyle**: This is related to equity – who gets higher density? Just one type of person or is that more equitably shared?
- **Bill**: Need to define terms (slide 24).
- **Jody Lahendro**: UVA Ivy Corridor plan, including hotel/academic buildings and additional development.
- **Bill**: Need to update the UVA boundary – Ivy Corridor, Brandon Ave., health system.

3) Current Residential Zoning Patterns

a) **Bill**: On slide 26 – Some areas shown as UVA properties are owned by UVA Foundation.
b) **Rory**: Can currently only build ADUs on single family detached parcels (R-1 only) per §34-1200. ADU viability map shows more than just R-1.

4) Future Land Use Framework

a) Would you suggest any changes to the objectives?
   - **Rory**: Create opportunities for people to get out of their cars to help achieve climate goals.
b) **Rory**: Regarding the draft land use map from the previous PC effort - There was an early December 2018 council meeting where PC presented a more intense future land use map. After that, decided we want to roll back the map intensity but keep the legend from the other map.
   - **Lyle**: The thought was to develop a map to the legend.
   - **Jody**: The 2017 map in the slideshow is from very early on – from before we started to talk about how we can increase development densities and incentives. I was bothered by the quote on the slide about not increasing density – we knew we needed to increase density.

5) Draft Future Land Use Framework

a) **General Discussion**
   - **Liz**: The Woolen Mills node is in the cemetery. What's the rationale for that one?
     - **Ron**: Will adjust the placement of the bubble, which was inadvertent. Out intentional for the Woolen Mills node in general is that in parts of that neighborhood, there are some large parcels that may be able to provide opportunities for a mix of employment and perhaps residential uses.
   - **Liz**: The Locust Grove node seems to be close to a tight off-ramp.
     - **Ron**: The design team will review the node's location. Thinking to the future, we want to consider opportunities to improve intersections/ramps along 250 where possible.
   - **Gary Heaton**: What is the term we are using for the UVA node, shown as blue on the map?

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  - **Ron**: There is not a specific name for it right now. It's an employment center – UVA and area around could be a node to support more intensive uses.
  - **Bill**: Should we make UVA bubble a lavender color like the other nodes?
    (a) **Gary**: We've talked about UVA as a unique feature of the city. City/university interface may be different. I like that it's a different color.
- **Jody**: In earlier processes, we were looking at adding a "neighborhood amenity" category – we were trying to not specify exactly where these nodes may go.
- **Rory**: Wants to better understand the placement and size of the nodes and what that indicates.
  - Downtown – seems to be on downtown proper. Downtown is the largest job area, largest attractor. But that node has the same dimensions as McIntire Road.
  - Need to pay attention to topography on some corridors, e.g., McIntire, northern part of 5th Street. Would make development difficult. Purple that was on McIntire road on previous map was industrial corridor. North of that is more mixed use, retail.
  - Avon Street seems to be omitted – lots going on in the county on their side of Avon.
  - Cherry Avenue neighborhood sees the Avenue as more of a corridor.
  - Ivy Corridor – UVA will develop a lot of that.
  - Greenbrier intersection with the County – may be a missed opportunity.
  - With corridors – does it always make sense to have a full length along the corridor? What's the rationale for a corridor, instead of a node?
    (a) JPA – maybe just part of needs to be a corridor
- **Bill**: Cherry Avenue - should that corridor be pulled in?
  - **Jenny**: Could be different scales of corridors.
  - **Hosea**: Don't demote Woolen Mills as a result of any scaling approach.
- Lyle:
    (a) Thinking about major nodes and major land uses – UVA medical center is the most intensive land use in the region. In many ways, it's distinct from UVA.
    (b) Cville High School – giant parking lot and all SF zoning around.
- **Rory**: With some of the later maps in the earlier process, we thought about where to put smaller nodes – could be some good ideas in there.

b) Do you think this general Framework aligns with the discussions that have taken place over the last year?

- Thumbs up from most
- **Gary**: Yes, if we can pursue a unique designation for the UVA area.
- **Rory**: Really think about UVA area in a special way. Adjacent neighborhoods feel that UVA students trickle out, expand, and put pressure on surrounding neighborhoods. Take existing student areas, fit more in there, relieve pressure on the other areas. WMS for example – more families in 10th and Page and Fifeville now. With WMS, we let the students

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spill out and made them student areas. 14th-Rugby, JPA, Fontaine → could look at more growth there.

- **Bill**: Agree with Rory – some areas were up-zoned 20 years ago or so. Resulted in some larger apartment buildings.
- **Rory**: University high-density areas don't allow the highest densities in our use matrix.
- **Liz**: UVA medical center – keep in mind legacy of UVA and encroachment. Leads into bigger picture question. Also, how do we specify areas that may be threatened by soft density?

c) **Rory**: How does the comp. plan land use map interact with the Urban Ring development map?

d) **Lyle**: Preston has a weird history. I hesitate to bring it up. During urban renewal, it was supposed to be a 6-lane highway. We scrapped the plan—as a result Preston was only widened from Downtown to Washington Park. It is designated a Neighborhood Corridor in the Streets That Work plan. Its history is a story of privilege and race.

e) **Jody**: For the next steps with the map, will it have hard boundaries or fading boundaries?

- **Hosea**: Doesn't the faded map give more flexibility? Don't we want that?
- **Rory**: The reason we moved to the faded ap was because the rigidity of the 2013 map was causing some problems.
- **Lyle**: We don't want a parcel-by-parcel land use map but not sure the best way otherwise.
- **Lee Einsweiler**: I would suggest that zoning is plan implementation. Therefore, though we don't need a 1:1 match, the community wants to know boundaries. Otherwise, people may manipulate the plan against neighborhood wishes.
  - **Jody**: It's going to be hard to make significant changes in the Future Land Use map if we're stuck with hard boundaries –anything more aggressive will create a lot of controversy and questions – will have to go parcel by parcel.
  - **Gary**: It'll come down to that in the end anyway. Where we're anticipating changes/growth, we do need to say where that will happen – may be able to say that a property owner adjacent to a space that is changing may have options that others may not have.
  - **Rory**: We have wrestled with transition zones and realized we needed to differentiate a corridor gradient from the potential for mixed use, commercial uses. That's why we ended up going back to designating with hatch marks for mixed use as separate from intensity.
  - **Taneia**: I want to be clear that the key is definitive, with different intensities. Need things to be delineated. Can't just say that if you're across or adjacent to an area, you have flexibility; we need to have specific circumstances we stick to. As Lee said – we need to have the delineation so people know.

f) **Lyle**: Other thoughts from 2018 process.

- Avoid having radically different uses facing each other. We want like-facing-like.
- Recognize the topography. Lower lying areas can handle more height.

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  - **Taneia**: E.g., Habitat site on Harris Street

6) Other discussion

a) **Hosea**: To LaToya – we'll need to handle equity issues deftly. Will want to talk about the equity issue as it pertains to land use in Charlottesville. We don't want to haunt people.

b) **Taneia**: Is the community engagement process over? Want to know what the demographics have looked like in each phase.
   - **Jenny**: No, the engagement process is not finished. We can provide information about previous phases compare.

c) **Hosea**: UVA is beginning to think about affordable housing, beyond what goes on with the students at UVA. Bill and Alex can connect the Cville Plans Together team to the UVA consultants, who have been hired as a "sherpa" to help UVA through the process to see what would make the most sense.
   - **Alex Ikefuna**: We had a LUEPC meeting last week where we gave an update on our process. As we move forward, RHI and staff will have to touch based with UVA Architect regarding the projects and initiatives.

d) **Bill** (via chat): Here is the latest UVA Today write-up regarding the affordable housing initiative at UVA.

7) Contributions by the Public

a) **Bill Emory:** I'm a huge fan of planning. I hope that you can give the public some tips on how this plan will be modified as we go along. Woolen Mills asked for a Small Area Plan in 1988. We have a lot of institutional memory. It's disturbing to see the node in the middle of the graveyard.

b) **Kimber Hawkey:**
   - Glad to hear Lee talk about the impact on neighborhoods. Seems like decisions are being imposed on neighborhoods. I live in the Belmont neighborhood.
   - Questioning the community engagement that has been completed. How many people gave input and how does that break down by neighborhood?
     - *Note: To see previous summaries of the input gathered during the Cville Plans Together process, and who we heard from, you can view the engagement summaries posted here.*
   - Haven't seen anything about tree preservation, historic preservation, greenspace preservation.
   - Downtown Belmont was imposed – City looking to co-op historic residential neighborhood as an extension of the downtown mall. Consider maybe something like "Belmont Center" instead. Seeing that designated as a major node is concerning – how do people feel about that? We haven't had corner stores, we've had big commercial and other

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issues – not small restaurants, etc. Lots of people coming from outside the neighborhood. Restaurants have become an odor nuisance.

- Haven't seen a Small Area Plan for Belmont - why hasn't that been done? How do we involve the neighborhood in that? Concerned to see Purple as a high intensity area – floodplain is still in that purple area.
- Would love to see the emails of the Planning Commission back on the website so people can have a conversation with them.

c) **Josh Carp:** Lives in Rose Hill.

- Have been thinking about displacement and gentrification. Glad we're taking it seriously; should have policies to explicitly prevent it. If evictions are a problem – make that harder. Need better tenants' right.
- Small lot development is not the problem. Looked at the map. Some high intensity areas are kind of crummy for reasons that are not likely to change soon. Harris Street - concrete manufacturing plant, etc. Don't want to live next to a concrete facility. High intensity on Barracks maybe makes sense but it's loud and highly trafficked. Wouldn't want to be around there on foot – housing there is good but don't put all the smaller cheaper housing where people don't want to live. Put more density in desirable places – lots of downtown, more of Belmont, near schools – want to be able to walk to schools. Let people live where people want to live. Don't reduce intensity – maybe add more intensity close to where people want to live.

d) **Neil Williamson:** Change is hard, but change is needed. Concerned by some comments. Concerned if zoning changes what comp plan says. Concerned with non-specific nature of this discussion – looking forward to more specificity. Need objective metrics regarding the impact of changes – hard at the comp plan level, but community needs to understand what we're proposing. How/what objective metrics would impact the dovetailed affordable housing plan? Will there be enough units? Could it work? These are knowable answers. Want to get to them. I really hope that this will result in more housing everywhere, for everyone.

e) **Lise Stoessel:** Thanks for this meeting and the information.

- What changes are you envisioning for the River Road corridor? I was a part of a Zoom call about the river corridor – specifically, is there a possibility to move the industrial features away from the river and develop that as the natural and rec resource that it is? I see that there are apt. buildings going up – would be great to change that all into mixed use residential, affordable housing, nice place to live, school nearby. Why do we need heavy industrial businesses there if they can be elsewhere in the city? We need to celebrate the beautiful river and not hide it behind industrial businesses.
- What changes do you envision for the Woolen Mills node? I know there's a new refurbishment – what beyond that?
- Would it be possible to move the large metal recycling industry out to Avon Mills extended area? That could be better utilized as residential/mixed used.

f) **Kurt Keesecker:**

DRAFT

- Great job. The thrill of the process is taking big ideas and translating into action that can carry forward. Mix of big concepts – then we get to details and it gets harder.
- Could continue to use the big idea diagrams we used previously– helps to guide community discussion.
- Regarding the issue of faded vs. hard edges on land use map – I think we found that our hard-edged line was faded, too. Soft edges might push debate until later but in terms of planning, big ideas would allow more flexibility to be responsive to the boots on the ground.

g) **Caroline Satira**: I was having difficulty identifying the locations for the nodes. Is this because they are preliminary? Can you identify streets?
   - Jenny noted that we will make locations more clear moving forward.

h) **Emily Dreyfus:** If I recall correctly, COVID-19 has stood in the way of community involvement work that was originally envisioned. Need to preserve cultural diversity, need to slow down/stop displacement happening for Black families. Need to consider which neighborhoods will be most important for up zoning, where we want to build the duplex to quads or small apartment buildings. CLIHC really hopes that you won't do that in predominantly Black neighborhoods that still exist – 10th and Page, parts of Fifeville, Prospect, Rose Hill, etc. – these need to be protected from increased density.

8) Final comments from the Planning Commission

a) **Liz:** We will also need to explore how the Future Land Use interacts with both historic districts and conservation districts, etc. May be a way the neighborhood can both be protected and change? *(Note: This comment was provided in response to a comment from a community member about Woolen Mills.)*

b) **Rory** (via chat): A lot of the additions of areas in the later, more dense 2018 maps were to put more near schools/parks.

c) **Liz**: Next deeper dive – want to talk about what we mean by soft density, etc.

d) **Rory**: One of the goals in the Affordable Housing Plan is to create multi-family by-right beyond soft density in historically exclusionary areas. Want to see that better reflected in the future maps.

e) **Gary**: How do we introduce the emphasis on affordability and equity in the city? How do we put that in the zoning? Plan needs to reflect movement toward affordability and equity. Like showing UVA as a different color, and moving toward a more specific designation, because soft edges don't work in the end.

f) **Taneia**: Moving in right direction. Want to make sure community engagement is capturing the right demographics. We had talked about the Greenbrier neighborhood, etc. – not much has changed as far as the intensity goes. Looking forward to next time we meet with an update.

g) **Lyle**: Adequacy, equity, access to schools and parks. If we can hit that more, we've got it. What I see so far makes sense.

DRAFT

h) **Jody**: At the first broad-brush concept level, concepts such as increased dense mixed-use, hub-and-spokes, transitions between density, maximize access to transit → these are all things we were working on three years ago, so it's heartening to follow in the same kind of direction. Devil is in the details from here on out.

i) **Hosea**: Consider increased density with equity in mind. Desegregation – keep in mind the culture with Vinegar Hill, etc., when we present these ideas. We do want to increase density, but make sure we market this correctly. Infill development is challenging – will be expensive because we have to do all the work to mitigate the impacts to environment (streams) when we build on difficult slopes.

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